



5.

THE ETHICS OF VIVISECTION.

"Quamvis enim melius est bene facere quam nosse, prius tamen est nosse quam facere."

I TAKE the pregnant words in which Karl the Great (better known to us as Charlemagne) expressed his primary object in founding schools throughout his Empire, as an appropriate introduction to the attempt I am about to make towards the solution of a much-vexed question of Ethics. For while in regard to most matters there is a general agreement as to what is ethically right—the difficulty being to carry our theory into our practice—Vivisection is a subject as to which it seems to me far more difficult for a really earnest and honest seeker to find out what his duty is, than to do it when found.

I once heard it pithily said in a discussion upon the "rule of duty"—"There can be no question between the *white* and the *black*; but what are we to do about the *grey*?" Every one knows of "cases of conscience," in which the man who honestly desires to do right is distracted between two opposing motives, each laudable in itself; as, for example, when the question is one of strict adherence to truth, a violation of it (whether by word or act) seeming absolutely necessary to avert impending evil. In these mixed cases, as Dr. Martineau long since pointed out, conscience is an *ethical judgment*, based on the *comparative nobility of the motives* on either side.—It is an unfortunate peculiarity of the present case, that the extreme partisans on both sides cannot admit that there is any room for hesitation in the matter; the grey looking quite *white* to some people, and quite *black* to others, just (as I shall presently endeavour to show) according to the light reflected upon it from themselves. And as it seems to me that there are most excellent motives on each side, which are but very inadequately appreciated on the other, my object will be to give them *all* their due weight, and then endeavour to strike the balance justly.

In any discussion of this kind, the greatest care should be taken, first, to call things by their right names, and secondly, to state the questions at issue in their simplest form. And I cannot but think that the Anti-Vivisectionists deceive themselves in this matter, by the use of language which in effect prejudges the question. Thus, they constantly speak of vivisection as "cruel," and of animals subjected to it as being "tortured;" and hence easily conclude that as every right-minded person *must* reprobate cruelty and torture, vivisection ought to be absolutely and completely put down, like bull-baiting or cock-fighting. But is the infliction of pain—even of agony—in itself "cruel?" Is a father "cruel" in inflicting on his child what he honestly believes to be a wholesome chastise-

ment? Was the surgeon "cruel" who (before the blessed discovery of anæsthetics) had to excise joints, to dissect-out enormous tumours, and to perform other tedious operations upon the most sensitive parts of the body, compared with the suffering of which that sustained in the skilful and rapid amputation of a limb was as nothing? Is the soldier "cruel" who does his very best, whether in attack or defence, to kill and disable as many as possible of the enemy he has to face? On the contrary, do not we applaud each for the honest and fearless discharge of what he deems to be his duty?

Clearly, then, it is not in the act itself, but in *the motive of the act*, that its moral character lies. The "cruel man," according to the definition of Dr. Johnson, is one who is "disposed to give pain to others; willing or pleased to torment, vex, or afflict; destitute of sympathetic kindness and pity." And while the noun "torture" in its original meaning is synonymous with extreme pain or agony, its use has been so constantly associated with those *acts of torturing* which consisted in intentional inflictions of the severest pain *for pain's sake*, that its application to cases in which the ultimate object is admitted to be laudable, and the pain is unfortunately a necessary condition of its attainment, is as clearly inappropriate to a well-devised Physiological research, as it would be to a Surgical operation.

Again, I cannot but think that great confusion has arisen from the mixing-up of questions which ought to be decided by different tribunals. The question whether Vivisection ethically can or can not be justified must be discussed upon ethical grounds; no considerations of expediency can make that right which is in itself morally wrong; but the question what *is* morally wrong is one as to which, as I shall endeavour to show, the common sense and common feeling of educated mankind have more to say than has yet been urged. On the other hand, the question whether physiological experimentation has, or has not, contributed in any considerable degree to human welfare, is one as to which I utterly deny the competency of any judge, who has not made a special study of the history of the subject. The vastness of the revolution thus worked within my own recollection in one single department—the functions of the Nervous System—with all its multifarious bearings on pathology, therapeutics, and psychology (normal as well as abnormal), can only be appreciated by such as are able to put themselves back fifty years, and to look into that chaotic darkness whose dispersion has given place to our present light. If any one who has made a life-study of the progress of Physiology, and of the multifarious applications of the advanced knowledge of our time to the diagnosis and treatment of disease, will assert that this knowledge is otherwise than *inestimable*, I am quite ready to join issue with him. But until I meet with such an antagonist, I feel justified in taking my stand upon

what I deem an incontrovertible fact; and in asserting that as physiological experimentation has contributed largely to human well-being in the past, so, when rightly directed, it is likely to be attended with the like benefit in the future.

Reduced, then, to its simplest form, the Ethical question which lies at the "root of the matter" is this:—*Is it right or justifiable to inflict severe suffering upon brutes, in order to obtain scientific knowledge likely to prove advantageous to man?*

This question is unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative by the Medical Profession at large, which looks upon this subject in the light of the νόμος which constitutes the very basis of its existence. Every one who enters it takes upon himself (tacitly if not expressly) the obligation to do everything in his power for the prolongation of human life and the mitigation of human suffering; and is held grossly culpable, as well by the public as by his brethren, if he allows any consideration for his own personal welfare to interfere with his discharge of that duty. He is expected not only to risk his own life in attendance upon the wounded in the field of battle, or upon the sufferers from the most malignant forms of contagious disease; but to incur the danger (which lurks in spite of every precaution) of carrying infection home to those most dear to him. And, putting aside these extreme cases, it is the rule of his conduct in the ordinary routine of practice, to be continually sacrificing the daily meals and the nightly rest which are essential to the maintenance of his power of gaining a livelihood, to the calls of professional duty. I do not affirm that this rule is universally followed; there are "skulkers" in every calling; but it is that which the conscience of every man who is worthy to be a member of the profession feels to be binding upon him. What would be said of him, and what would he have to say to himself, if a man were to bleed to death from a wounded artery, or a woman from uterine hemorrhage, because he had stopped at home after receiving an urgent summons, only long enough to swallow the food or take the repose which he sorely wanted? It is often sneeringly asked of the doctors, whether *they* would be willing themselves to suffer the pain which they claim the right to inflict upon animals, for the advancement of medical knowledge. They can answer with truth, that the practice of their profession by the great body of hard-worked and ill-paid members who constitute its "rank and file," is *constantly* inflicting upon large numbers of them a *far greater* amount of suffering, moral even more than physical;—a fact made only too apparent to the subscribers to the Medical Benevolent College, by the appeals continually made on behalf of widows and orphaned families left almost destitute by the death of their bread-earners from infectious disease—a sad case of which fell within my own immediate knowledge while I was residing at Ripley (Surrey) in 1844—5.

Such, then, being the "rule of duty" which the Practitioner of medicine makes the guide of his own daily life, it is not to be wondered at that he should regard it as *paramount* whenever (according to his educated judgment) the welfare of man is likely to be promoted by the infliction of suffering upon brutes. And he can find abundant justification for his view of the case (as I shall presently show), not only in the support given by "society" to the field-sports whose pursuit involves a vast aggregate of animal suffering, as well as an unnecessary sacrifice of animal life, but in the common feeling of mankind at large (not excepting, so far as I am aware, the most ardent anti-vivisectionists), which sanctions not only the temporary infliction of pain, but a lifelong deprivation of happiness, for its own pleasure or convenience.

But I am fully ready to admit that when the professional νόμος is carried from the Practice of the healing art into the Physiological laboratory, a new element comes in which is too often lost sight of. The question is no longer one of *self-sacrifice*, but of our right to inflict severe pain (with the very best motives) upon creatures which are helpless in our more powerful hands, and which themselves receive no adequate compensation for their sufferings. There undoubtedly is a class of Vivisectors by whom this consideration has been altogether ignored, and whose principles and practices alike deserve the strongest reprobation. It is to the credit of British physiology that, until a recent period, this class was confined to Continental schools. Those, for example, who had a leading share in the working out of our present body of accepted doctrine as to the functions of the nervous system, took anatomy as their guide; and only when they had learned as much as possible from it, "put Nature to the question" by experiments so devised as to test and correct their conclusions. Sir Charles Bell thus introduces his narrative of one of his early experiments:—"After hesitating long on account of the unpleasant nature of the operation." And when they had satisfied themselves of the validity of those conclusions, they ceased to perform experiments that involved suffering to the subjects of them, for the mere purpose of exhibiting their results to others. This, again, was the case with those experiments made by Drs. Hope, Williams, Billing, and others, within my own recollection, by which the causes of the normal sounds of the Heart were elucidated, so as to enable the physician to diagnose the conditions which give rise to the sounds heard in disease; those humane men most sincerely regretting the infliction of the pain, which was a necessary incident of an investigation justly regarded by them as fraught with benefit to suffering humanity. But such has not been the prevailing tone of the Continental schools. In the earliest days of my medical pupilage, I was taught to hold in abhorrence the needless cruelties of Magendie, and the wanton brutalities of the

Alfort Veterinary College; and I have entertained the same feeling throughout the half-century which has since passed over my head.¹

Being myself not without apprehension lest admiration of the Continental zeal for scientific progress should take too exclusive a hold of our rising school of Physiologists—utterly repudiating as ethically indefensible the doctrine of Professor Virchow, that man has the same right to inflict suffering upon the animals he rears for his uses, as he has to kill them—and feeling a no less sincere abhorrence at a large proportion of the acts cited in the last number of this journal, as done under the sanction of that doctrine, than is expressed by the narrator of them—I by no means deprecate the action of the Anti-Vivisectionists in making the British public acquainted with the horrors enacted abroad; and I would earnestly press it upon some of my younger friends, that this dreadful exhibition of the abuses of what I—not less than themselves—uphold to be in itself a justifiable procedure, shows the danger of looking at the object *too exclusively* under the light of a laudable desire to advance science and to benefit mankind, so that it seems to them a *pure white*, untempered by that dark shadow of animal suffering which (happily) lies over no other field of scientific inquiry.

But are not those who can see nothing but the *blackness* of “cruelty” and “barbarity” in Physiological experimentation guilty of the like or even of greater exclusiveness? Do they not show themselves utterly disregarding, not only of the benevolent and beneficent νόμος of the Medical profession, but even of the very principles they themselves assume as the basis of their moral condemnation? Let us try *their* conduct by Ethical tests.

What *are* the moral rights of brutes? Will any one maintain that they are *equal* to those of man? Was the “golden rule” meant by its promulgator to apply to animals? Is it not the very basis of Ethical doctrine, that the moral rights of any being depend upon its moral nature?

(1) I recall a little incident which may serve to illustrate the difference between the ideas of British and Continental physiologists on this point. It happened about 1850 that Magendie came over to London on a commission of medical inquiry; and my friend Dr. Sharpey and I having been invited by Sir James Clark to meet him, we asked him for particulars about the then recent experiment, in which Bernard had induced an artificial diabetes by puncturing the fourth ventricle of the brain. He offered to show us the experiment, but said that he should require for it the particular knife which he had devised for his own experiment of dividing the fifth nerve within the skull. Dr. Sharpey having confessed that he had not got such a knife in his possession, and further that he had never repeated Magendie's experiment, and Magendie having turned to me and received the same answer, he could not restrain his surprise; “Vous, Messieurs,” he burst out, “vous vous appelez Professeurs de Physiologie, vous, et n'avez jamais coupée la cinquième paire!” Of course we assured him that the implicit faith we placed in his account of the results of that experiment made it unnecessary for us to repeat it; but he seemed quite unable to conceive how physiology could be taught without the exhibition of experiments so important.

In the old times of the Anti-Slavery agitation we used to see pictures of the negro kneeling in chains before the white tyrant holding a whip, and urging on him the claim, "Am I not a man and a brother?" Would the most ardent Zoophilist urge such a claim in behalf even of a dog or a cat; would not the claim be still more absurd for a rabbit or a guinea-pig; more again for a frog or a tortoise? Nothing but a low sensibility to physical pain can be affirmed in behalf of the reptile; nothing higher than "cupboard love" shows itself in the rodent; and if the domesticated dog or cat shows a capacity of attachment to man, which sometimes seems almost human, it must not be forgotten that this is merely superinduced by association with him, and that the fundamental character of the animal remains untouched. The cat, which purrs with pleasure under the caressing hand of its mistress, does not give up its feline habit of keeping a hapless mouse in an agony of prolonged pain and terror before giving its victim the *coup de grâce*. And nothing but the deterioration of its physical courage keeps the amiable Newfoundland from showing on occasion the savage nature of the bull-dog, or the sociable Skye from worrying "vermin" when duly trained to the contest. That dog-nature undergoes no permanent or essential elevation by association with man, is further evidenced by the well-known fact that when domesticated dogs run wild (as in the case of the descendants of the dogs first introduced into South America by the Spaniards), they soon return to the almost wolf-like condition of their ancestors.

Thus, then, the *narrow limitation and unprogressive range* of the moral nature of animals justify a corresponding limitation of their moral rights, as compared with those of beings of *unlimited capacity for progressive elevation*; and I hold this to be the Ethical justification of those dealings with them which are sanctioned by usages that have never, I believe, been seriously called in question. True it is that there are a few amiable Vegetarians who refuse to eat fish, flesh, or fowl, on the ground that man has *no right* to take the life of *any* animal; but I never heard that such persons carried out their principle to the extent of cheerfully giving their own bodies to be bitten by bloodthirsty insects, or letting rats and mice multiply unchecked in their dwellings. Everywhere and in all ages man has claimed and exercised the power of life and death over the animal creation; deeming himself perfectly justified in putting out of existence such as are noxious to him, and in limiting the natural term of life of such as he breeds and rears for his uses. I never heard any moral objection raised either to the killing of innocent lambs, calves, or sucking-pigs, or to the slaughter of the worn-out horse; all that humanity is thought to demand of us being that their death shall be attended with as little suffering as possible; forbidding, for example, that calves should be repeatedly bled for the sake of whitening their meat, and that turkeys should be subjected to the

barbarous treatment required for the production of *pâté de foie gras*. The moralist justifies the breeding and rearing of animals with a view to their being killed for food at a fitting time, by the consideration that the sum of animal happiness is thereby increased. But would any one maintain that if *we* were the subjects of such an arrangement on the part of a race stronger than ourselves (as in the case of the victims whom the Khonds of India used to keep for years until the time for their sacrifice arrived) we should view it with the like complacency? Clearly, then, this is a case to which the "golden rule" does *not* apply. On the contrary, it is universally felt that there is a sacredness about *human* life which altogether removes it from the pale of comparison with that of animals; and it is the universality of this feeling that constitutes the ethical basis of the professional *vóμος*. If this sacredness were in anywise lowered in the eyes of the practitioner of medicine, innumerable evils would inevitably follow. Not only would he be continually tempted to prefer his own ease and comfort to the calls of professional duty, but he would be in danger of having his own moral perceptions confused and perverted in those most trying cases, in which simple humanity cries aloud for a *euthanasia*, on behalf not only of the sufferer himself, but of those who are being worn and wasted by the sight of a prolonged agony scarcely less grievous than the torments of the rack, without the least hope of its termination otherwise than by death.

But how far does the same hold good in regard to animal *suffering*? The painless taking of life, it may be justly urged, is to the animal a mere *negative* evil; but the infliction of severe pain is a *positive* evil which is often so much worse than death, that we feel ourselves not only justified, but impelled by the strongest motives of humanity, to "put out of its pain" a dog or a horse that has sustained a severe and disabling injury, or is the subject of an agonizing disease. I entirely agree, therefore, with those who urge that animals *have* rights against such as carelessly or wantonly subject them to pain, still more against those (if such there be) who actually take pleasure in the sight of their sufferings. But do these rights justly demand on our parts an *absolute abstention* from the infliction of pain, or even an abstention from any pain but what we should ourselves be willing to bear under the like circumstances? Let us seek for an answer to this question in our most familiar experiences.

As we breed and rear Sheep and Oxen that the materials of their bodies may serve our uses, so we breed Horses for the sake of their mechanical "energy;" and we consider ourselves justified in getting out of them as much work as they can be made to do without severe physical suffering to themselves, in repayment for the feeding, housing, and general care we bestow upon them. But are the horses consenting parties to this arrangement? What should *we* say if a conquering nation were to use *us* as beasts of draught or burden?

Should we not raise the cry, "Am I not a man and a brother? Have *you* a right to treat *me* like a brute beast?" Clearly, then, the common sense of Mankind claims—in virtue, not of superior strength, but of higher elevation in the scale of being—to make the horse labour for man's use, allowing to him in return only the right of kindly treatment at our hands.

But is it not a matter of every-day experience that our occasions require some extraordinary exertion, such as the horse can be only induced to put forth by the application of whip or spur—or, to put it in plain terms, by the infliction of pain? If an Anti-Vivisectionist puts himself into a cab, on his way to denounce the atrocities of "doctors" at a public meeting, and finds that the continuance of the jog-trot pace at which he is going will cause him to miss his appointment, does he hesitate to tell the driver to urge on his horse—knowing well what this extra speed involves? Or, if he had the misfortune to be dangerously injured by a railway collision in a place far removed from medical assistance, and were lying in bodily and mental agony, counting the minutes until relief could arrive, would he be content to wait the good pleasure of the horse whose rider goes off in search of the doctor, or of that on which the doctor comes to his rescue? Would he not rather feel that all that the horses *can* do must be got out of them by the free use of whip and spur?—the limited and temporary suffering inflicted on the lower creature being quite justifiable in view of the greater (because permanent and far-reaching) benefit conferred on the higher—involving, it may be, the future welfare of others dearer to him than his own life. Let me put one more case for my opponents' consideration, which, whether it did or did not really occur, may be accepted as a "crucial instance." A man, condemned to death for a crime he had not committed, is brought out for execution, and the noose is already round his neck. A rider is seen in the distance urging towards the scaffold a horse covered with foam, and obviously ready to drop with fatigue; he waves something in his hand with a deprecating gesture; the execution is stayed; the crowd opens to let the horse reach the scaffold; the rider presents the reprieve which had been obtained at the last moment by the production of unexpected evidence of the prisoner's innocence; and the horse drops down dead. Who shall condemn the use of whip and spur, even to this extreme, for the sake of preserving the life of an innocent man, with all its possibilities of future happiness and usefulness? The Anti-Vivisectionist may *talk* about his unwillingness to profit by sufferings inflicted upon innocent brutes; but will any one *say* that he had rather have been hung than that the horse should have suffered to save him? Or, if he dares say it, would any one but a Zoophilist *believe* him?

I suppose "Anti-Vivisectionist" sometimes visits the Zoological Gardens. Does he ever ask himself on what grounds the lifelong deprivation of the liberty of wild animals is to be justified—

involving as it generally does a serious deterioration of their health and vigour?¹ It cannot be asserted that Man gains any other benefit from the sacrifice he thus requires, than the pleasure he derives from the sight of the creatures about whom he reads or hears—the gratification, in fact, of an intelligent curiosity. But I have never heard it seriously called in question, that the lifelong injury here inflicted on a small number of brutes is justified by the vast amount of rational pleasure imparted to a very large number of men, whose moral nature it thereby helps to raise, rather than tends to degrade.

I have one more point to urge, which, though touched upon by Sir James Paget, has never yet been thoroughly brought out. If I am forced to speak plainly of a thing usually referred to under some veil of euphemism, it is because the necessity of the case requires my doing so. In the rearing and breeding of sheep and oxen for clothing and food, and of horses for our mechanical aid, it is found requisite that by far the larger proportion of the males of these races should be deprived of their generative power, only a sufficient number being left in possession of it to propagate the race. I need not enumerate the reasons by which this practice is justified; it will suffice for my argument to say that they are reasons of expediency only. Compare our silent acquiescence as regards the brute, with the abhorrence with which the like infliction upon man is now regarded throughout Christian nations. Most people know that even in the last century the practice was kept up in Italy, for the production of male *sopranis*, some of whom sang in the Pope's chapel, while others performed on the Operatic stage. But even Continental humanity having pronounced against it, the practice has been long discontinued. It is still maintained, however, among those Eastern nations whose women are kept in seclusion under the guardianship of these unsexed beings; the moral condition of most of whom, according to all accounts, is one of extreme wretchedness. But will any Zoophilist claim the like exemption, on the ground of a community of rights based on a community of moral nature, for sheep, oxen, or horses? Surely the obvious reply would be, "We do not inflict on them a moral degradation; the pain of the operation to which we subject them is temporary and limited; the pleasure of which we deprive them is purely physical; we give them large compensation in the care with which we supply their physical wants; and the material welfare of mankind is permanently promoted in a measure which is out of all proportion to the injury done."

(1) No Orang or Chimpanzee brought young to this country has ever attained adult growth, none surviving the second dentition. The skeletons of caged Carnivora are often good for nothing as museum-specimens, their bones being rickety and distorted. The teeth of menagerie-specimens of the Hyæna (I have it on the highest authority) are seldom good enough to serve as guides in the determination of fossil species.

My argument, then, is, that if in all the foregoing cases the Moral consciousness of those who consider themselves most elevated in the scale of humanity justifies the infliction of animal suffering for what is obviously a real benefit to Man, even though the continuance of such benefit involves *the constant renewal of the suffering*, much more is *a temporary and limited infliction* justifiable, for the discovery of such scientific truths as have a clear prospective bearing on human well-being, moral as well as physical; since every such discovery, once established, is *a boon for ever*, not only in its direct applications, but in serving as a stepping-stone to further discoveries, which may prove of still more priceless benefit.

If the prospect of such amelioration which opens out before the view of the Experimental Physiologist is not a high and noble motive, I do not know where such a motive is to be found. But that anticipation must be assured by the most careful and prolonged study of the subject on his own part, and should be confirmed by the approval of others of equal or superior competence, before he can be justified in entering upon a course of experimentation involving severe and prolonged suffering to the subjects of it. In the course of his investigation he should never forget the pain he is inflicting, or lose sight of any means he can devise for its avoidance or mitigation. But when all this is honestly begun and sedulously carried out, I can from the bottom of my heart wish him "God speed;" in the full conviction that his work is good and right, and will be approved as "merciful" in the highest sense, by that Divine Father who desires from us the obedience of the spirit, not that of the letter.

Let it not be said that I have been here drawing an ideal picture. The "antiseptic surgery" which constitutes by far the greatest single improvement ever introduced into Surgical practice, is the result of a long course of experiments planned and carried out on the basis afforded by Pasteur's admirable researches upon disease-germs, by a man reared amidst a religious community distinguished above all others for its far-seeing humanity, trained in biological science under the ablest teachers, approved by his previous labours as a profound and philosophic physiologist, and a master of the science and art of surgery. I hold up this research as a model for the imitation of Physiologists, whether medical or scientific; and should be surprised indeed if any Anti-Vivisectionist who had the misfortune to sustain a compound fracture of both legs in a railway-collision (as once happened to a valued friend of my own) should refuse to avail himself—or herself—of its beneficent results; or if, having made a rapid and comparatively painless recovery under the antiseptic treatment, instead of (as happened in that case) having to go through months of protracted suffering, with long-continued apprehension that the sacrifice of one or both limbs might be necessary to preserve life, he should regard the work of Joseph Jackson Lister with any other feelings than those of the most grateful approval.

WILLIAM B. CARPENTER.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

WHEN, now over two years ago, the news reached these shores that William Lloyd Garrison was no more, it fell on the hearts of the few here who had known him intimately and followed his well-nigh fifty years' career, awaking an emotion such as that of no man of their time had done before. If his friends had been asked to express their feelings they would probably have felt that they could not do this better than in the words of Milton over the dead but victorious Samson :—

“ No time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause ; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd
A life heroic. * * *
* * * * *
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair ;
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.”

Just fifty-three years ago, in the year 1829, William Lloyd Garrison was undergoing trial in the court-house of Baltimore. He was accused of libelling one Francis Todd, a merchant of Newburyport, by denouncing him in a newspaper of the city, called *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, of which he was junior editor, for letting out his ship to carry certain slaves from Baltimore to New Orleans. An attempt was made to prove that at the time when the contract was entered into by the master of the vessel with the owner of the slaves, the owner of the ship knew nothing of the matter, but whether this was really so or not—and no doubt the master had good reason for reckoning on the owner's approval in what he did—no offence had been committed against State law, and as the defendant had previously refused to apologise, and as he had never made any attempt to deny his responsibility for the article, the jury, whether packed or not, found him guilty, and he was sentenced to pay a fine of 1,000 dollars. To pay a fine of 100 dollars would probably have been a hard matter for him ; to pay a fine of 1,000 was impossible, and in default he was sentenced to be imprisoned for two years.

This singular and self-appointed champion of a universally despised race had been born some twenty-five years before in Newburyport, Massachusetts, of middle-class parents ; had received the briefest and most meagre sort of education in the schools there that offered ; after working at various things and under various masters, had at last been bound apprentice to the printer of the *Newburyport Herald*, and had commenced writing at the age of sixteen in that newspaper.

In the course of the next few years he had served for a time as editor on more than one of the numerous papers of the country, and a few months before this trial occurred he had joined a poor and comparatively illiterate man of the name of Lundy, who ten years previously had started an insignificant print in Baltimore called *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* with the purpose of working for the abolition of American slavery. With this Mr. Lundy, Garrison had been engaged in conducting the paper until legal proceedings had been taken against the latter, and the partnership for the time at least necessarily terminated by his being sent to jail. Garrison, however, was not called upon to serve out his term. He had only been in prison about two months when a generous merchant of New York, Arthur Tappan by name, honoured himself by paying the fine, and the sufferer for human rights was again free.

Two years afterwards, in 1831, Garrison had fixed himself in Boston. On the 1st of January in that year a truly insignificant-looking print calling itself the *Liberator* dropped almost still-born into the wide American world. It consisted of only four pages, and the whole thing when fully unfolded covered little more than sixteen inches square. Looking at the top of the first column of the first page, the reader found it professed to be printed by *Stephen Foster*. Its editor was announced to be Garrison, who, after lecturing from town to town during the two years that had passed since his imprisonment, had finally cast anchor in Boston, "determined," as he wrote, "to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill, and in the birth-place of Liberty."

Garrison, then, wrote, edited, and, with the help of one white man and a negro boy, printed, published, and sold his puny weekly. For the object of the paper, it purported to be the "immediate and unconditional emancipation" of the slaves in America, and in the first leading article occur these words, remarkable as coming from the pen not of a novice and visionary, but of one who had all along seen life from the poor man's point of view, and who only two years before had been lying in a Southern jail, in the same cell that had just before held a murderer, for pleading the cause to which he was now again devoting himself for life. The writer says:—

"I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man, whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present! I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch—and *I will be heard*. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead."